

# The Sky Line Trail

University of Alberta Library



0 1620 2715299 8



*Photo by Peter Whyte.*

VOL. 3 No. 12  
October 1936



*Official Organ of the  
Sky Line Trail Hikers  
of the Canadian Rockies.*

Printed in Canada.



## Hiking in an Alpine Wonderland

by Mrs. James Simpson

August 7 to 10.

"To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flood and fell,  
 To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,  
 Where things that own not man's dominion  
 dwell.

And mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been;  
To climb the trackless mountain all unseen,  
With the wild flock that never need a fold;  
Alone o'er steeps and foaming falls to lean;  
This is not solitude: 'tis but to hold  
Converse with nature's charms, and view her  
stores unrolled." (Byron)

On the morning of August 7 we hiked over the main trail between Wapta Bungalow Camp and Lake O'Hara. Our first glimpse of Lake O'Hara was a revelation. The lake was as green as its Irish name suggests, and nestling at the foot of its rocky crags and peak, as romantic as the Island of Erin itself. Lake O'Hara derives its name from an Irish gentleman, Colonel O'Hara, who made the first trip in to its shores, before any direct trail had been made.

After a late lunch at the Chalet we spent our time sorting out our dunnage and getting settled

in our proper places before the remainder of our party would arrive. Some had decided to hike in later in the afternoon.

On the morning of August 8 the president arranged the different parties under leaders for the different hikes, some deciding to take one hike and some another. Those who preferred to weld the rod and reel had decided to spend the afternoon in camp.

As there are quite a selection of splendid hiking trails in the O'Hara district, it was not hard to satisfy everyone. Our party chose the southwest trail to Lake McArthur and Odaray Plateau. Equipped with camera, ruck sack, mountain stock and well-nailed boots, our party hiked upwards into a realm of beauty. Here the Lyall's Larch holds sway, king of the high latitudes, in a court of Alpine Flora.

After the first climb we came to a meadow where the trails to McArthur and Odaray Plateau branch off in opposite directions. As some of us expected to climb to the Plateau and Odaray Glacier in the afternoon we hiked on upwards on the trail to McArthur. Onward we climbed, ever looking back at the ranges and peaks on either side and the valley below. We paused to rest, to let the other members of our party make up on us. One of our members had a small powerful microscope which she let us look through. It is easy to look at massive mountain ranges, deep blue lakes and flowing torrents, but to look at God's work through this microscope and see before one's eyes the intricate detail and geometrical design of a small Speedwell, Saxifrage or seed spire of the Dryas in all its beauty of form and colour, was to each of us like looking into the very soul of nature. The petals of the Marsh Parnassus Grass looked like crystallized china, the stamens like small feathers sprayed with silver and the pistil like a green star with a sun ray in the centre.

When the remainder of our party joined us, we started on the last steep climb over the rock slides. One cannot describe the glory and grandeur of it all. All around the dazzling peaks and far below a minute universe. The season being rather dry and hot, had forced everything into bloom early, and although many of the flowers were in seed there still remained great patches of Moss Campion, Alpine Parnassus, Nodding Saxifrage and Veronica Alpina. It was truly a vision of God's Wild Rockeries. Every crack and corner of the gigantic rock ledges was studded with alpine flora. It was unbelievable: here high above timber line in



*Photo by R. H. Palenske.*

*We each picked a spot to rest.*





*Paris (the Totem Pole) considering his verdict on the comparative beauty of the three hiking Goddesses on the station platform at Hector (Wapta Lake.)*

*Photo by R. H. Palenske.*

*New footbridge on the Lake O'Hara—Wapta trail.*

*Photo by J. M. Gibbon.*





profusion were the rarest botanical specimens, and at last at the top of the slide we looked down on Lake McArthur—no words could express, no picture ever convey to us the beauty of this wild glacier lake. Great boulders skirting its edge and the sapphire water lapping on the rocky shore. Here up in the roof of the Rockies beside the water we each picked a spot to rest and eat our lunch, but not before cameras had clicked from almost every hand. We spent the lunch hour exchanging opinions on botany, geology, painting and generally getting to know one another. A brotherhood is born on these trips stronger than any ties of blood, and for the friendships alone these hikes are well worth while. Reluctantly we left the shore of Lake McArthur. On the return hike some of the party climbed over the trail to Odaray Plateau and returned later in the evening to O'Hara Camp.

On the morning of August 9 we took the southeast trail from O'Hara to Opabin Pass. Opabin or Umpabin is an Indian name meaning "rocks". A short distance from the Chalet we crossed a broiling torrent and hiked up the pine-clad mountain side. At every corner and bend of the trail we were arrested by some new feature. At an opening in the wooded cliff we watched a while the foaming falls, that in some past age had cut a pathway through the gigantic rocks, and split the mountain side from top to base, hurling its angry waters into the chasm below; that had echoed back its roar since the birth of time. Here and there from the cliff's edge we viewed in the distance the ever green O'Hara. The Chalet and cabins, so spacious, looked like doll's houses. The ranges beyond with Cathedral peak smiling down on it all like a mother guarding her children.

Suddenly we came to a beautiful strip of alpine meadow and paused to take a picture of a Ptarmigan and her young. She stood statuesque on a rock, never a quiver except to sound a warning to her little brood. They scuttled off into the heather, but returned a few seconds later to see what was keeping mother. It is remarkable how nature has provided this beautiful bird with courage and fortitude. We have watched the eagle soar high, have seen the ptarmigan dart to the rock ledge, the eagle circle above and dart down against the rocks where it thought the bird to be, then repeat again and again, and still the ptarmigan would sit perfectly still.

Nature seemed to speak in her own language on the Opabin Hike. A little farther up the pass on the muddy shore of a little lake, we found three sets of tracks—a story without words. Ten or fifteen minutes before we came along, a Grizzly Bear had crossed the trail. In the mud were his tracks and almost into the centre of his prints were the tracks of a Ptarmigan which

had obviously taken flight as he floundered along. Around his big paw marks were the foot prints of a mountain gopher. His little tracks did not lead out of the mud so we concluded his fate had been less lucky than that of the Ptarmigan.

We hiked around the edge of the little lake where our reflections were mirrored in the deep green water. Here the Lyall's Larch predominates. This beautiful alpine tree with its apple green, lace-like foliage and the eternal rhythm of its branches is the personification of Regal Majesty in An Alpine Wonderland.

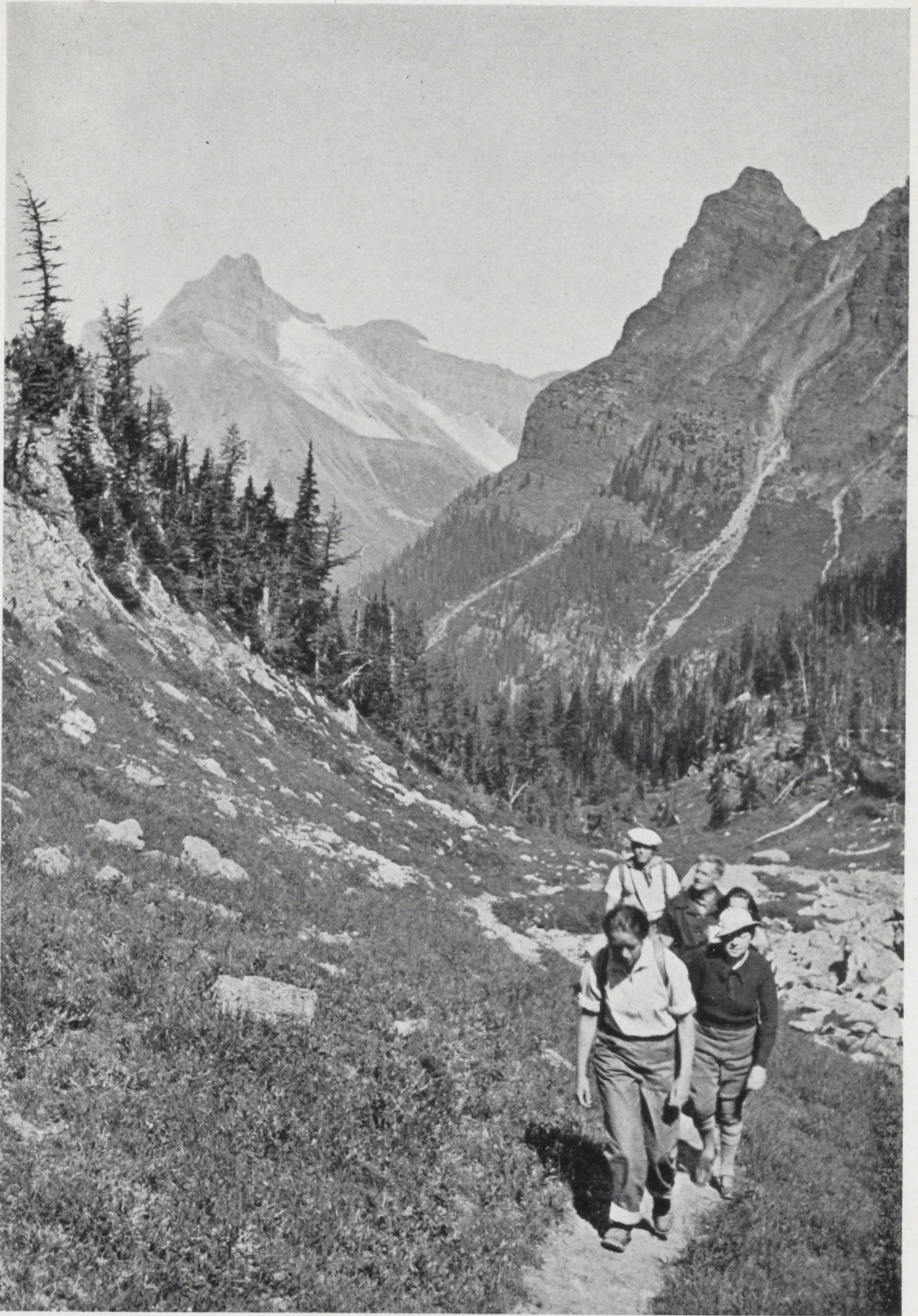
Having at last attained the summit of the steep we looked down on Mary Lake set at the base of pinnacle-shaped peaks of quartz that raise their cathedral-like spires to the heavens. A heather meadow swept down to the very shore. A Harlequin duck floated on the turquoise water. A marmot whistled a shrill welcome to us as we approached the shore and some of the hikers fed him part of their lunch. He seemed almost tame. It was a fitting climax of nature's revelations to watch this trusting little fellow come so close and almost take the bread out of the hand.

One of our members climbed over the moraine and ice to the summit of the pass while the rest ate lunch and exchanged experiences. Returning to O'Hara later in the day some of our hikers climbed to the Crystal Cave on the Wiwaxy about two miles from the Chalet. Here, over the tree tops, we had a spectacular view of Lake O'Hara. We felt it was one of the finest of all. A white boat on the lake looked in the distance like a graceful swan, and in perspective the Chalet and cabins were perfect. We got some fine crystal and returned, happy to enjoy a good dinner at the Chalet.

After dinner till the Pow Wow started at 8.30, we watched from the verandah the mauve—pink alpine Glow on the mountain peaks which was slightly veiled with the blue haze of a forest fire some sixty miles away. The trout were rising in the green water and everyone began to think of the tomorrow when goodbyes would be said and the ways of Hikers part for another year. We had all had a wonderful three days at O'Hara. The Camp is everything that can be desired. The charming Chatelaine, Mrs. Sidney Graves, had made us feel very much at home. Under her management her efficient staff had catered to all our wants. O'Hara is a paradise for Hikers, Climbers, Geologists, Botanists and Painters.

For the last three days we had crossed passes, forded creeks, climbed mountain ridges, and beneath the blue sky of the Northland mid wild glacier lakes, had stood together on the top of the world and viewed nature at her smiling best. Now, at the end of the trail, one could only wish that we might all sit together again around the Hiker's Camp Fire.





*Up the Steep Trail to Lake Oesa*

*Photo by R. H. Palenske.*





*The high  
view.*

*Photo by  
Carl  
Rungius*



*The low  
view.*

*Photo by  
R. H.  
Palenske.*

*Exchang-  
ing  
opinions  
on  
botany,  
geology,  
etc.*

*Photo by  
Carl  
Rungius*







*We hiked around the edge of a little lake.*



*Reluctantly we left the shore of Lake McArthur.*





*The climax of the Pow Wow—The cook of Lake O'H*





TRAIL RIDERS LAKE O'HARA - 1936 -

the cook of Lake O'Hara brings in the birthday cake

Photo by R. H. Palenske.



# *Impressions of the O'Hara Hike*

by A. N. Carscallen

After many years riding and hiking about the Rockies, from Crownsnest to Jasper, I attended the Annual Skyline Hike this year. The outing was a real treat to me, but possibly my interest was not inspired by the same things that would impress one for whom it was an initiation to the Rockies.

Possibly you liked the ramble around Lake O'Hara, through the pine scented forest, and up to Lake Oesa, because it was exhilarating exercise, and at the same time it enabled you to see the beautiful Seven Sisters Falls and the great walls of Mts. Victoria and Lefroy. I enjoyed it because after several weeks of strenuous hiking, riding, sawing, and chopping it was mild, gentle, soothing exercise — just the kind that my muscles craved. And oh that soft, springy, sun-bathed turf that has the pungent odor of frost cured grass! A few seconds squirming to find a comfortable spot, and then an hour or two of sun-snoozing!

I enjoyed the beauty too; possibly not the individual details — such as the delicacy of the little white Saxifrage or the odd formation near the summits of the Wiwaxy peaks — so much as the presence of beauty, which I cannot help but feel when in the mountains.

What about the company — authors, doctors, lawyers, teachers, engineers, artists and college students, from both sides of the Atlantic and from Newfoundland to New Mexico? Possibly some of your more intimate friends were present, and that always heightens the enjoyment. I, on the other hand, was having the good fortune to meet a great many people who to me were vitally interesting; people whose friendship, even though it is based on such a short acquaintance, I prize and respect.

I think that I appreciate the difficulties of organizing and running a camp or expedition of this nature. The management must have been perfect, because it was not at all in evidence. No officious dictators burdened with cares, bustling about telling you to do this or that, ordering you to be at breakfast precisely at seven-thirty, or suggesting that you neither carve your initials on the verandah railing nor throw water from your wash basin onto the pathway.

Did the spirit that looks after all good Trail Hikers comb the North American Continent to find leaders for our daily expeditions? I think that the "Old Man of the Mountains" just chuckled to himself and said, "These mortals are paying homage to me. I'll reward them handsomely!" Whereupon he emitted a hearty

laugh, and while the avalanches rolled like gargantuan tears down the wrinkles of his stony cheeks, delved into the cavernous bergschrund that houses his celebrities and drew out a naturalist, an historian and raconteur, two artists, and the dean of all hikers. What does it matter to him if we call them McCowan, Moore, Rungius, Whyte, and Sanson? I do hope someone closed up that bergschrund so they can't get back. We will want them again.

Did you have a great deal of fun during those leisurely hours in camp — chatting with charming young ladies from Montreal or London, singing Skyline songs under the leadership of Mr. Key and his organ, learning from Dr. Link some of the more intimate details of the private lives of mosses and lichens, or even screwing up your courage to the sticking point and diving off the raft into the green liquid ice of the Back Bay Bathing Beach? I enjoyed all of those things. — And no less the evening that George Vaux dropped in to our tent for a chat, and treated us with some very amusing selections from his repertoire of poetical yarns. The fact that we were not in bed until one o'clock proves the excellence of the entertainment.

Next morning I awakened at five-thirty — a habit that one gets into after having been used to wrangling horses soon after sunrise. What a feeling of well-being as the truth dawned with awakening consciousness — no horses, no arising with the dawn! You can imagine how satisfying it was to sink back into the eiderdown for another two or three hours slumber. That was my greatest luxury. I believe I enjoyed it even more than Claude Jones did the adjustable tent window which he so fondly cherished as a relic of civilized living. That little window looked in upon three inhabitants who were probably not untypical, in the diversity of their interests and experiences, of the other groups slumbering in tents, teepees and cabins throughout the camp. If you could have tuned in our dreams during those last few moments of slumber, stolen from the breakfast hour, you might have found Jones basking in the amenities of luxurious life aboard the Empress of Britain, Coleman interviewing a West Coast oriental — and doing his own interpreting, while I was probably astride the hurricane deck of a cayuse, midstream in the North Saskatchewan River, wishing that there were a lower plimsoll line on the pack-horse that was threatening my sleeping bag with total submersion.





*Photo by R. H. Palenske.*

*The President arranged the different parties under leaders for the various hikes.*

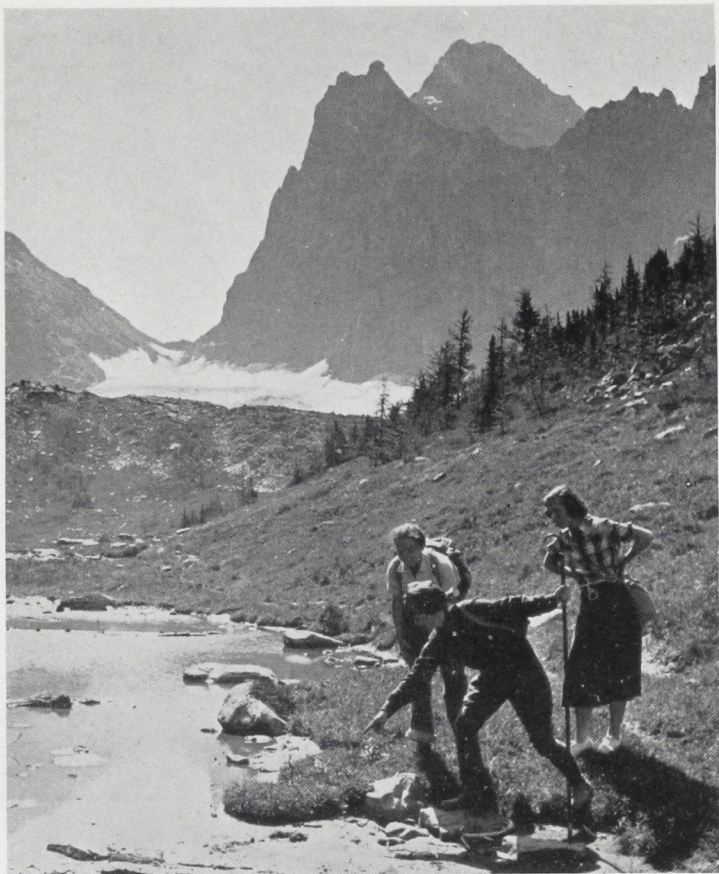
And so from our own thoughts, as varied as the hues that gather and disperse on the placid surface of O'Hara herself, we met for breakfast each morning in Mrs. Graves' hospitable dining room. Some might consider it ostentation to have such luxury on a camping trip. It is said, however, that a good camper is one who can take advantage of every opportunity for comfort. Most certainly we made good use of the dining room, for it saw the beginning and ending of each day's activities.

The last day of camp. The packers were throwing diamond hitches over our dunnage

bags and rolls. People were standing about in groups of three and four, talking of the holiday that was closing. O'Hara, in sparkling mood, smiled adieu, and was diffused with thousand dimples as we inwardly accepted the invitation to return. We were passing the little inlet that is the outpost to O'Hara, when Lefroy unloosed an avalanche that boomed and crashed down its forbidding slopes, until the rumbling, as it gradually faded and was lost in the forest, was the finale that rang down the curtain on four unforgettable days.

A. N. Carscallen.





*On the muddy shore of a  
little lake in Opabin Pass.*

*Butterfly hunting in  
Opabin Pass.*

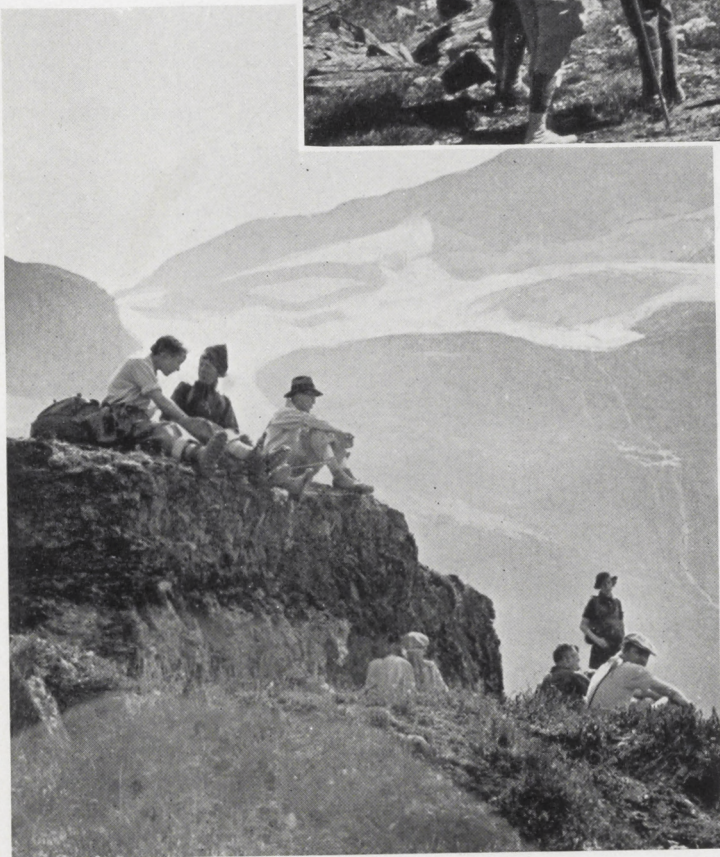
*Photos by R. H. Palenske.*





*'Oesa prowlers.'*

*Title and  
Photo by A. N. Carscallen.*



*Here and there from the  
Cliff's Edge.*

*Photo by R. H. Palenske.*



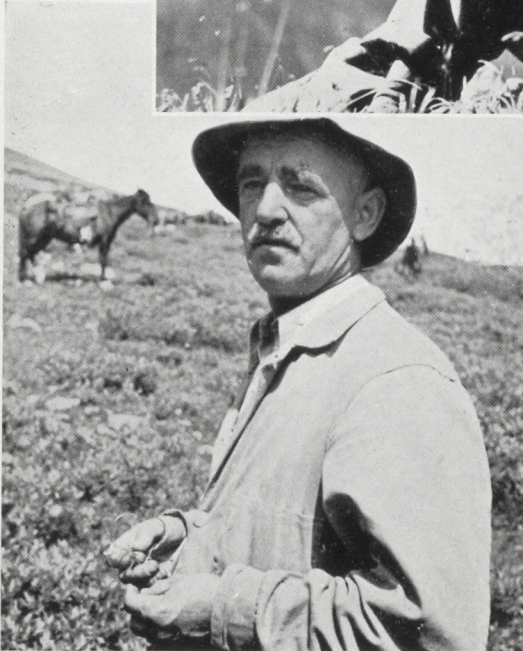
*Carl Rungius, President of  
the Outdoors.*

*Photo by R. H. Palenske.*



*Sam Ward dis-  
courses music.*

*Photo by  
Peter Whyte.*



*Dan McCowan, nature  
student.*

*Photo by R. H. Palenske.*



*One could  
wish we  
might all sit  
together  
again.*

*Photo by  
A. N.  
Carscallen*



*They came straight  
from old England.*

*Photo by R. H. Palenske.*



*A brother-  
hood is born  
on these  
trips.*

*Photo by  
A. N.  
Carscallen*



# Sky Line Trail Hikers

## OF THE CANADIAN ROCKIES

### Hon. President

SIR EDWARD BEATTY, G.B.E.

### President

PETER WHYTE (Banff)

### Hon. Vice-President

A. O. WHEELER, A.C., F.R.G.S.

### Vice-Presidents

MAJOR W. J. SELBY WALKER (Calgary)  
GEORGE VAUX (Bryn Mawr, Pa.)

LT.-COL. P. A. MOORE (Banff)  
MRS. JAMES SIMPSON (Banff)

### Secretary-Treasurer

J. M. GIBBON,  
Room 318, Windsor Station,  
Montreal, Canada

### Western Secretary

DAN MCCOWAN,  
Banff, Alberta

### Executive Committee

BYRON HARMON (Banff)  
SAM. WARD (Banff)

HARRY POLLARD (Calgary)  
MAJOR P. J. JENNINGS (Banff)  
MRS. GEORGE VAUX, JR. (Bryn Mawr, Pa.)

J. M. WARDLE (Ottawa)  
R. H. PALENSKE (Chicago)

### Council

A. N. CARSCALLEN (Calgary)  
L. S. CROSBY (Banff)  
DR. ROBERT GOW (Banff)  
MISS ANNA GUSTAFSSON (San Francisco)  
F. T. MATHEWS (Calgary)

MRS. DAN MCCOWAN (Banff)  
T. B. MOFFAT (Calgary)  
H. G. PECKHAM (Vancouver)  
CAPT. E. N. RUSSELL (Field)  
MRS. JAMES SIMPSON (Banff)

MISS ADELAIDE SMITH (Montreal)  
MISS M. S. STRAWBRIDGE (Montreal)  
MISS L. TURBAYNE (Banff)  
MRS. A. O. WHEELER (Sidney, B.C.)  
MRS. PETER WHYTE (Banff)

### Honorary Members

J. B. HARKIN (Ottawa)  
WALTER D. WILCOX (Washington, D.C.)

J. M. WARDLE (Ottawa)  
WILF. CARTER (Calgary)  
CARL RUNGUIS (Banff)

MISS ELIZABETH BOOZ (Washington, Pa.)  
N. B. SANSON (Banff)

### Life Members

MRS. GEORGE VAUX, JR.

GEORGE VAUX

J. M. GIBBON

## LIST OF MEMBERS

Adam, Miss Edith, Marlow, Bucks., England  
Aemmer, Rudolf, Lake Louise, Alta.  
Angus, J. A., Banff, Alta.  
Armbrister Fred., Nassau, Bahamas.  
Aylen, Miss Gwyneth, Ottawa, Ont.  
Aylen, Miss Dorothea, Ottawa, Ont.

Bain, A. D., Lake Louise, Alta.  
Bonar, J. C., Montreal.  
Booz, Miss Elizabeth, Washington, Pa.  
Brewster, James I., Banff, Alta.  
Brewster, Mrs. James I., Banff, Alta.  
Brewster, Mrs. Pat., Banff, Alta.  
Brodnitz, Dr. Otto W., New York, N.Y.  
Buck, Robert, Evanston, Ill.

Cancille, Mrs. Rita, Phoenix, Arizona.  
Carscallen A. N., Calgary, Alta.  
Carter, Wilf., Calgary, Alta.  
Coleman, H. T., Vancouver, B.C.  
Conant, Rev. Ruth S., Hartford, Conn.  
Crosby, L. S., Banff, Alta.

de Laitre, John, Wayzata, Minn.  
de Laitre, Mrs. John, Wayzata, Minn.

Engelhard, Miss Georgia, New York, N.Y.  
Erminger, Miss Bertha, Chicago, Ill.  
Erminger, Mrs. H. B., Jr., Chicago, Ill.

Feuz, Ernest, Lake Louise, Alta.  
Fife, Miss Margaret, New York, N.Y.  
Finland, Miss B. E., Winnipeg, Man.  
Fryckberg, Miss Marjorie, St. Paul, Minn.  
Fulda, Miss Ruth, Banff, Alta.

Gibbon, J. M., Montreal, Que.  
Gillespie, G. F., Montreal, Que.  
Gillespie, Miss Marion, Montreal, Que.  
Goodrich, Miss B. L., South Milwaukee, Wis.  
Gow, Dr. Robert, Banff, Alta.  
Graves, S., Lake O'Hara, B.C.  
Gustafsson, Miss Anna, San Francisco, Cal.

Hains, Douglas, Montreal, Que.  
Hall, Fred H., Ottumwa, Iowa.  
Harbison, Miss Helen D., Philadelphia, Pa.  
Harmon, Byron, Banff, Alta.  
Harper, Miss Jane V., Chicago, Ill.  
Holmes, Miss Clara, Winnipeg, Man.  
Houston, Miss Martha I., Lethbridge, Alta.

Jamieson, Mrs. Edna, Victoria, B.C.  
Jennings, Major P. J., Banff, Alta.  
Johnson, Miss Erica D., Trail, B.C.  
Joice, Miss Margaret G., Saskatoon, Sask.  
Jones, C. A., London, England

Kellermann, Maurice, New York, N.Y.  
Kellermann, Mrs. Maurice, New York, N.Y.  
Key, Harold Eustace, Montreal, Que.

Lum, Dr. Frederick H., Jr., Chatham, N.J.  
Lum, Mrs. Frederick H., Jr., Chatham, N.J.  
Lynch, Daisy, Winnipeg, Man.

Mathews, F. T., Calgary, Alta.  
Mathewson, Miss Hope, New York, N.Y.  
Maxwell, Miss Clara, New Westminster, B.C.  
Mitchell, G. B., New York, N.Y.  
Moffat, T. B., Calgary, Alta.  
Moore, Miss T. Digna, Beamister, Dorset, England

Moore, Mrs. P. A., Banff, Alta.  
Moore, Lt.-Col. Philip A., Banff, Alta.  
Moore, R. O., Beamister, Dorset, England  
Moorhead, Miss Margaret H., Bassano, Alta.  
McCormick, Chauncey, Chicago, Ill.  
McCormick, Roger, Grotton, Mass.  
McCowan, Mrs. Dan., Banff, Alta.  
McCowan, Dan., Banff, Alta.

Page, Miss Isabel W., Philadelphia, Pa.  
Palenske, R. H., Chicago, Ill.  
Palenske, Miss Betty, Wilmette, Ill.  
Pease, Albert A., Oak Park, Ill.  
Peck, Miss G., Moose Jaw, Sask.  
Peckham, H. G., Vancouver, B.C.  
Pickard, Frank A., West Concord, Mass.  
Phillips, Mrs. W. J., Winnipeg, Man.  
Phillips, W. J., Winnipeg, Man.  
Pollard, Harry, Calgary, Alta.

Rabinowitz, Edwin X., Philadelphia, Pa.  
Redman, Miss Winifred, Toronto, Ont.  
Reid, Douglas, Banff, Alta.  
Rice, Wallace H., Kansas City, Mo.  
Rogers, Mrs. D. N., Southampton Hants, England.  
Robinson, Mrs. J. Dean, Banff, Alta.

Rolston, F. W., Hamilton, Ont.  
Rungius, Carl, Banff, Alta.  
Russell, Capt. E. N., Field, B.C.

Sandman, Miss Ida, New York, N.Y.  
Sansons, N. B., Banff, Alta.  
Scott, Miss Irene, Montreal, Que.  
Simpson, Mrs. James, Banff, Alta.  
Sloper, Mrs. Leslie A., Boston, Mass.  
Sloper, Leslie A., Boston, Mass.  
Smith, Miss Adelaide, Montreal, Que.  
Somerville, Ian C., Philadelphia, Pa.  
Spouse, Mrs. John, Vancouver, B.C.  
Stern, Carl, New York, N.Y.  
Stevenson, Prof. O. J., Guelph, Ont.  
Stevenson, Mrs. O. J., Guelph, Ont.  
Stewart, Miss M. B., Whitby, Ont.  
Strawbridge, Miss M. S., Montreal, Que.  
Sussdorff, Louis, Jr., Washington, D.C.  
Sutherland, Miss Margaret, Calgary, Alta.

Tilem, Dr. J. G., Philadelphia, Pa.  
Thomas, Miss Dorothy M., Malvern, Worcs., England  
Turbayne, Miss L., Banff, Alta.

Vaux, Mrs. George, Jr., Bryn Mawr, Pa.  
Vaux, George, Bryn Mawr, Pa.  
Vaux, Henry, Bryn Mawr, Pa.

Walker, Major W. J. Selby, Calgary, Alta.  
Ward, Mrs. Samuel, Banff, Alta.  
Ward, Samuel, Banff, Alta.  
Watts, Miss Freda E., London, England.  
Wheeler, John O., Sidney, B.C.  
Wheeler, A. O., Sidney, B.C.  
Wheeler, Mrs. A. O., Sidney, B.C.  
Wilde, J. R., London, England  
Wilde, Mrs. J. R., London, England  
Wilder, Miss Emma N., La Crosse, Wis.  
Wilson, Miss Betty, Banff, Alta.  
Wilson, Miss Bernice, Banff, Alta.  
Wilson, Mrs. John C., Banff, Alta.  
Whitford, W. C., Evanston, Ill.  
Whyte, Peter, Banff, Alta.  
Whyte, Mrs. Peter, Banff, Alta.  
Whyte, Miss Dorothy V., Lynn Creek, B.C.  
Wyatt, Miss Elva A., Chicago, Ill.